

GOSV NEWS



The latest from the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism

January / February 2011

Features

[Maryland Celebrates Day of Service](#)

[How to: Improve Your Web Presence](#)

[Spotlight on: Anne Arundel County Volunteer Center](#)

[VGF Grantees](#)

50

years ago, the Peace Corps was founded. Since that time, over 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation.

Out of the Ordinary Volunteer Opportunities

Hone your Marketing Skills

Do you have a knack for marketing or event planning? Consider gaining more experience and contributing your talents at United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Maryland. [Read more.](#)

Be a Mentor in Washington County

Giving just 45 minutes to an hour a week, during the school year, school based volunteers visit their Little Brothers and Little Sisters at school. School-based mentors are there to listen, to give

Happy New Year!

It is a pleasure to share this first 2011 issue of our newsletter. As we've been kicking off our new year workplan, it's become evident how much is new, different, and better here at the GOSV. The last two years have brought technology upgrades, a completely new staff structure, and opportunities to advance service and volunteerism in a number of new ways.

These advancements are the result of improvements by the Governor's Office, new funding and regulations from the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the leadership of our service commission. Below you'll find a quick look at some of our key changes; we look forward to engaging all the individuals and agencies who have supported this office over the years in all of this good, new work as we move forward together.

What's new at the GOSV?

- Up-to-the-minute website at www.GOSV.maryland.gov -- this is your go-to place for information on Maryland AmeriCorps funding, volunteer recognition, and more.
- Online presence to promote all aspects of service and volunteerism and to reach all corners and citizens in Maryland -- follow us on Twitter [@MarylandServVol](#).
- Annual volunteer management conference and Governor's Service Awards luncheon on May 12 -- for the second year, the GOSV will partner with a state-wide association to offer a free conference for professional volunteer managers. This year, our partner is the Maryland Council of Directors of Volunteer Services, and the Governor's Service Awards will also be presented during the luncheon.
- Maryland Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) -- thanks to support from the Corporation for National and Community Service, this month the GOSV awarded grants of \$25,000 to six volunteer centers across the state.

In service,
The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism

Maryland Celebrates 25th Anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Last week, Americans celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Martin Luther King Day of Service. Governor O'Malley was among 22 individuals nationwide, only 3 of which were governors, named as an [Ambassador of Service](#) by the Corporation for National and Community Service. To mark this occasion and celebrate the spirit

advice when asked and to have fun!
[Get involved.](#)

Plow Snow for Military Families

SnowCare is in the process of helping volunteers provide snow removal services for military families nationwide.
[Learn more.](#)

Follow us on [twitter](#)



[Check out our video feature of Jemi, an AmeriCorps member with Project CHANGE!](#)

of service, the entire O'Malley Brown Administration took part in an array of volunteer activities.

The day began at Turkey Branch, a tributary of Rock Creek, near Aspen Hill, where the Governor took part in a stream clean-up. He then traveled to the Howard County Food Bank to help with organizing and packing donations. First Lady Katie O'Malley and several cabinet members spent their morning at Our Daily Bread, in Baltimore serving a meal.



Lt. Governor Brown, the highest ranking elected official in the nation to have served in Iraq, spent the morning and afternoon making projects and cards in support of the troops in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. In Annapolis, members of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, and several cabinet members, celebrated the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and participated in service projects at the [Banneker-Douglass Museum](#).

The Governor and member of his staff concluded their day of service at [The Baltimore Station](#) in South Baltimore. Volunteers brought lasagna and garlic bread for dinner, served the meal, and socialized with the residents.

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the Martin Luther King Day of Service, the Corporation for Nation and Community Service is calling on all Americans to honor Dr. King by pledging to take at least 25 actions during 2011 to make a difference for others and strengthen our communities. [Click here for ideas and inspiration for serving in the coming year.](#)

How to: Improve Your Organization's Web Presence

Community organizers know that traditional media and communications have shifted dramatically to web-based information over the last decade. While we still exist in a time where a combination of communication tools is often the most effective way to reach an audience, it is sometimes unclear to organizations how best to tackle their web presence.

Here are a few tips to consider as a new organization in development or as an established organization looking for ways to improve the public's perception of your organization online.

1) Keep content current

Old and outdated information on your site can send a confusing message to your visitors who expect to find a site that sends a clear message about the strengths and capabilities of your organization. You'll want to put your best foot forward and welcome those people who take the time to find your organization online with relevant and timely information.

2) Don't bite off more than you can chew

While it may be tempting to provide links to hundreds of resources, multiple calendars of activities, and a news feed on your site, consider the time and content development needed to maintain these services. It's better for an organization to have a visitor see a slim website with clear factual statements, than for a website visitor in July read about last year's holiday food drive, see an empty calendar of events, and click on broken links.

3) Focus on your audience

When writing content for your website, always be mindful of your range of audiences. Consider who your primary visitors are and what information they are trying to find on your site. Ensure that it is easily accessible. Are staff contacts and hours of operation easy to find? Does the terminology and language used on your site make sense to all readers? Be aware of acronym usage that may be second-nature to your staff, but foreign to a potential client or partner. If you are uncertain about the ease of reading your site, consider asking multiple types of audiences to review your site and explain what parts seem confusing to them.

4) Consider the consequences

When placing content on your website, consider whether the image or text would be appropriate to include in your organization's annual report or another printed document. If the statements you provide contradict the mission and vision of your organization, or may seem offensive, inappropriate, or unprofessional to your potential clients, funders, or colleagues, it is best to avoid posting.

The immediate nature of the internet may lead us to think that a comment or photo can be quickly removed; but media stories have proved how easily a webpage can be captured and shared, long after the original content has been removed. Think twice before posting.

5) Less is more

As you consider colors, graphics, and interactive features, remember to let your program or organization shine, not your animated .gif files. While it may seem spirited to add an animated flag and flashing text to your layout for Veterans Day, your organization may be better represented by a high resolution photo with quality text.

Spotlight on: Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County

"We want to help you to help others," proclaims the Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County on its website. Much like other volunteer centers around the State, Director Fay Mauro and her team are dedicated to "connecting people with opportunities to serve, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs in Anne Arundel County."

The Center has a range of opportunities for all members of the community. For businesses, it offers services to determine employee volunteer interests through focus groups and surveys, recommendations for establishing Employee Volunteer Programs, and group volunteer service opportunities for team-building and civic engagement.

The Center's website includes a list of about 65 Full Partner Agencies, those that collaborate with the Volunteer Center through expanded outreach and extended technical and training assistance. It also has connections to about 300 associate partner agencies, offering volunteer opportunities in the vicinity. For Anne Arundel residents with busy schedules or wanting to test the volunteer waters, the site has a current list of one-time opportunities.

In celebration of National Mentoring Month, the Center and Anne Arundel Mentoring Roundtable will present the 6th annual Mentoring Awards Ceremony on January 26, 2011, at the Pip Moyer Recreation Center, 273 Hilltop Lane, Annapolis 21403 from 6 pm - 8 pm.

For more information about the Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County, visit www.volunteerannearundel.org.

Congratulations to Volunteer Generation Fund Grantees

In the last issue of GOSV News, we discussed the purpose and process for applying for Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) support. We are pleased to announce the recipients of these grants below.

Business Volunteers Unlimited Maryland

BVU will use VGF funds to begin a Volunteer Leaders program. The volunteer center will recruit young professionals and older adults and train them to develop volunteer projects.

Montgomery County Volunteer Center

The Montgomery County Volunteer Center will use VGF funding to increase volunteerism through their "Pledge 25" initiative which encourages residents to volunteer 25 hours between Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January and Make a Difference Day in October. Montgomery County will also use funding for website updates and to transition to the new HandsOn Connect database.

ShoreCAN Volunteer Center

The ShoreCAN Volunteer Center will use VGF funding to hire a part-time Program Assistant to increase outreach efforts and transition to the new HandsOn Connect database. ShoreCAN also intends to become a HandsOn Action Center; this transition will include holding a volunteer recognition event and a Day of Service event.

Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County

The Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County will use VGF funds to hire a program manager to jumpstart a new FLEX Volunteer Program. FLEX Team Leaders will plan and recruit volunteers for five service projects each month.

Volunteer Center Serving Howard County

The Volunteer Center Serving Howard County will use VGF funds to hire a part-time Program Manager who will take on some outreach responsibilities, increase training programs, and develop a program directed to older adult volunteers.

Volunteer Southern Maryland

Volunteer Southern Maryland will hire a part-time Program Assistant to increase outreach and training efforts, work with consultants to conduct a needs assessment, and investigate opportunities in virtual volunteering.

